

AUGUST

1975

AT THE
CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

AUGUST MEETINGS

Dates & Times: Matinee, 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, August 13

Evenings, 8:00 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday, August 13-14

Place: May Trott Morrison Auditorium

Speaker: Sandra and John McCosker

Subject: "IN SEARCH OF COELACANTHS"



Dr. John McCosker headed the 1975 California Academy of Sciences' Comoro Islands Expedition; a team of American and French scientists and divers, who, during last February and March, set up a base camp in the Indian Ocean. The major purpose: to bring back, if at all possible, a living Coelacanth, an ancient fish thought to be extinct for some seventy million years. Naturally, there were attendant research projects that proved to be amazingly successful — and all this is part of the McCosker adventure.

It was a multi-faceted foray, to say the least, what with extensive photography both above and in the water; studies on land of the fascinating native peoples — Malagasy, Arabs, Africans; and much taping of primitive music by Sandra who, for sometime, has been deeply involved in ethnographic music. Dr. McCosker is Superintendent of Steinhart Aquarium.

We are given the whole story through the extensive preparations, the departure, the often harassing unexpected vicissitudes, the joy of discovery, and the eventual return of the aquatic troupe from an adventure unique in Academy history.

Three presentations as usual and your membership card admits you through the main entrance of Cowell Hall. At the matinee performance you may be asked to present it once again at the auditorium entrance.

MORRISON PLANETARIUM

"OUR MARVELOUS MILKY WAY" is the subject of the summer sky show in the Theatre of the Stars. Performances daily at 12:30, 2:00 and 3:30, and two evening performances, Wednesday and Thursday at eight. Admission: \$1.50. Those 17 and under: 50c.

"LASERIUM" continues as a box-office champion featured in the planetarium at specially-arranged times. Members are reminded that this is *not* a planetarium show *nor* are your membership tickets or passes usable for this attraction. Performance schedule: Monday and Tuesday at 5:00, 7:30 and 9:00. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, at 5:00, 7:30, 9:00 and 10:30. For all five o'clock shows, the price per seat is \$2.50. For all other performances: \$2.75. Seats are available at Bay Area Seating Service outlets (Pacific Stereo stores, Discount Record stores, and Montgomery Ward). If a performance is not sold out, tickets may be purchased at the planetarium box-office one-half hour before performance time. Telephone 752-8268 anytime for information.

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

"THE GENIUS OF BENIAMINO BUFANO", a retrospective one-man show devoted to this late, great San Francisco artist. Continues until the end of the year in Lovell White Hall and surrounding areas.

"SKYLAB" continues in Hofteld Gallery through the end of summer.

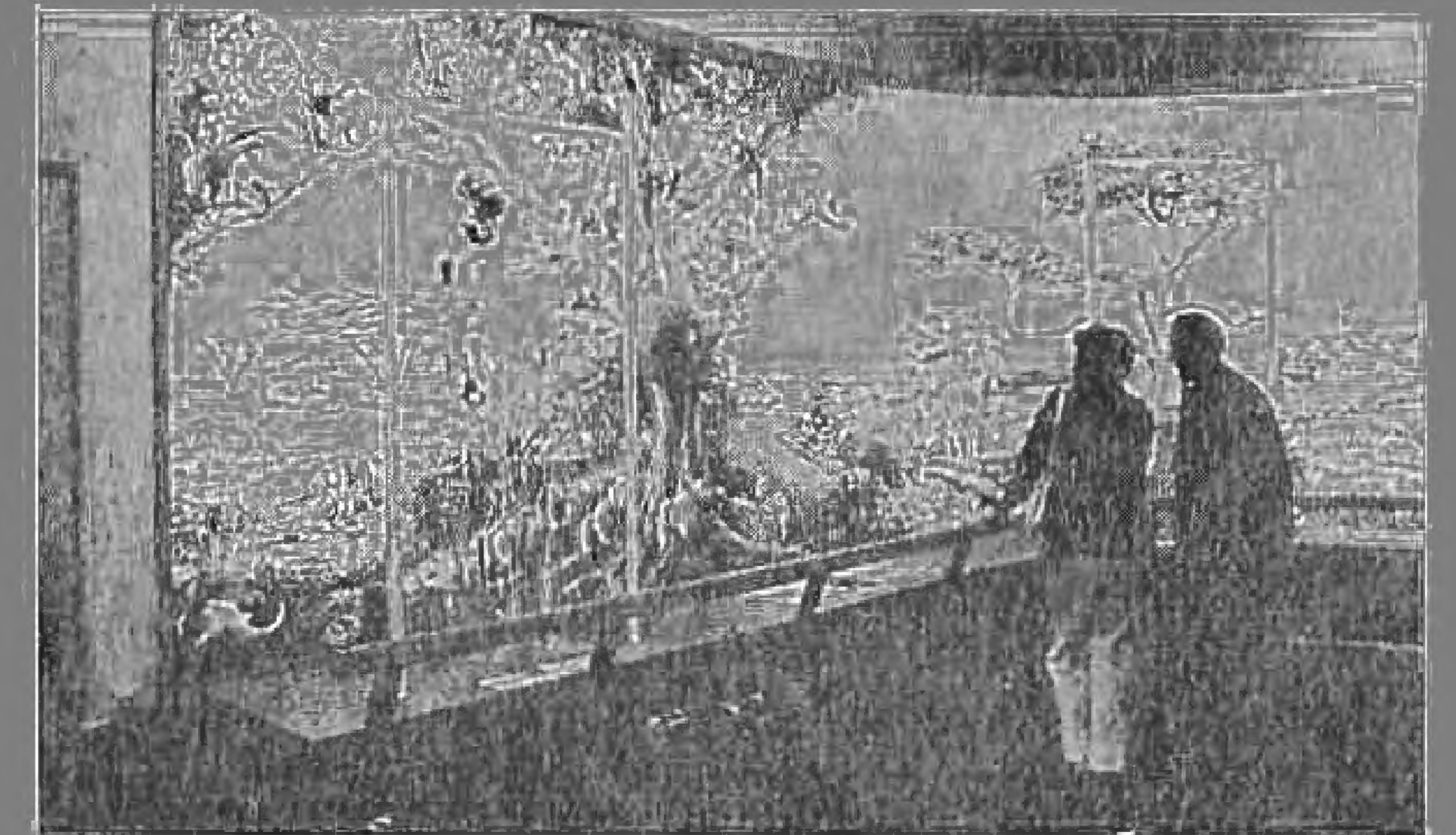
"CETACEA" (marine mammals) continues indefinitely in Cowell Hall.

AND DON'T FORGET! Through Labor Day, September 1, all public areas of the Academy will remain open until nine in the evenings. Doors open every day at ten — so share the news with your friends.

ADVANCE NOTICE OF MONTHLY ACADEMY MEETINGS

September 10-11, October 8-9,
November 12 (Open House)

News and Notes



An incredibly exciting piece of work and assuredly a major addition to the Academy exhibits is the new adjunct to Simson African Hall and its arresting display titled "African Origins of Man". This new display features a forty-foot mural in color plus an ingenious giant jigsaw puzzle wall that captures one's fancy not only by the pieces that are present but equally so by those that are absent.

The jigsaw hinges on two words, "WHY AFRICA?", followed by four statements, magnified by text, to wit: Because early humans lived there. Because their remains fossilized. Because those fossils are unusually accessible, and because our nearest primate relatives live there today. It is a truism to say that museums primarily are concerned with "things". This display is unique in that despite its size, only 26 "things" are involved in the form of casts of 26 pieces of fossilized bone found in various parts of Africa. The remainder of the exhibit rests in the text and the inviting world of ideas and suppositions — and a dramatic world it is.

For decades there has been a steady acceleration of interest in Africa and man's evolution through the centuries. In deciding to do this exhibit, the Academy was fortunate in many, many ways, but certainly the most important was in the person of Dr. F. Clark Howell, a paleoanthropologist at the Univer-

sity of California, Berkeley. He, in turn, enthusiastically enlisted the aid of other world authorities all of whom were more than generous with their time and ideas in this area of research. In simple terms, the Academy was given more and higher caliber assistance than could have been expected or imagined. This, then, can be said without equivocation: here, for your inspection, is the most recent paleontological information to come out of Africa.

The mural, a year in creation, is certainly the most important painting in the Academy since the dioramas for Simson Airman Hall's annex were finished. The mural is the work of Richard E. Cook, Assistant Curator, Department of Exhibits. He is also responsible for the design of the hall. He was given volunteer assistance in the detailed painting but to him belongs the lion's share of the credit. And since statistics are impressive, there are over 3300 individual animals inhabiting the mural. The Instrument Shop contributed mightily to the display which managed to present some problems never encountered before and which took much thought and work to overcome, but overcome they were.

The text was written by Ernest Rook in consultation with the aforementioned Dr. Howell, and of Yves Coppens, Musée de L'Homme, Paris. The material was researched by Margaret Day, Henry Erickson, Albert W. Zukosky, Jr. and others. The exhibit was made possible by grants from Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Garfield and the National Endowment of the Arts.

Please note the following special event scheduled for Morrison Auditorium on the afternoon of Monday August 11. There will be five showings of two 16mm films which pertain to the Chinese archaeological finds exhibit currently drawing capacity crowds at the Asian Art Museum across the Music Concourse. Titles: "Historical Relics Unearthed in Mainland China" (1 hour); and "2,100 Year Old Tomb Excavated" (one-half hour). Show-times are scheduled for 10:30 a.m., and 12:30, 2:30, 4:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Admission is free to all Academy members (upon presentation of membership cards) with a 50c admission fee for non-members. These showings are sponsored by the Previews Committee of the Junior League of San Francisco, Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

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